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TO: Deputy Director (Intelligence)

SUBJECT: Switzerland's Neutrality

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Switzerland's neutrality as envisaged by the Treaty of Vienna of March 1815 was not a new conception, nor was the recognition of this neutrality by foreign powers a novel idea.

The Act of Perpetual Swiss Neutrality and Inviolability, signed on 20 November 1815 by Austria, Great Britain, Russia and Prussia did not define Swiss neutrality. It merely declared Switzerland a perpetually neutral country in the much quoted lines, "The neutrality and inviolability of Switzerland and its independence from all foreign influences are in the true interests of the policy of the whole of Europe."

The act expressed an unqualified acceptance by foreign powers of Switzerland's special position, but did not include a direct guarantee by the signatories.

The Quadruple Alliance signed by the same four powers made clear their intention to maintain for twenty years, by force if necessary, the general European settlement of which the Swiss settlement was a part. The Quadruple Alliance Treaty read in part as follows, "...considering that the repose of Europe is essentially interwoven with the confirmation of the order of things founded on the maintenance of the Royal Authority and of the Constitutional Charter, and wishing to employ all means to prevent the general Tranquility... from being again disturbed...(the four powers) have resolved to give to the principles solemnly laid down in the Treaties of Chaumont of the 1st March, 1814 and of Vienna of the 25th of March, 1815, the application the most analogous to the present state of affairs and to fix beforehand by a solemn Treaty the principles which they propose to follow, in order to guarantee Europe from dangers by which she may still be menaced."

The treaties of Chaumont united militarily the four powers against Napoleon and the forces of the French revolution.

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It does not appear that the Swiss recognized or believed that their neutrality was guaranteed. They would not have desired any such guarantee, for by implication this might have conferred on the guarantors rights of supervision and even intervention.

Between 1815 and 1848, Austria, Prussia, and France repeatedly intervened in the purely internal affairs of the Swiss. For instance, Metternich forced the Swiss to restrict the admission of political exiles because their presence on Swiss territory was contrary to neutrality. King Louis Philippe of France forced the Bern government to stop its attempts to liberalize the status of the church. Prince Louis Napoleon was forced to flee from Switzerland because of French threats of war against the Swiss if he continued to reside there. After 1848, whenever their neutrality was challenged, the Swiss were able to combine "firmness" with skillful negotiation, a policy backed by military forces.

The Swiss joined the League of Nations in 1920, having had the proper guarantees of Swiss neutrality inserted in Article 435 of the Treaty of Versailles of which the Covenant of the League became a part. Article 435 specifically referred to the 1815 treaties as "constituting international obligations for the maintenance of peace." This meant that the guarantee of Swiss neutrality established at the Congress of Vienna was recognized as still being in force.

Moreover, the Council of the League of Nations at its second session in London in February 1920 adopted a resolution known as the "Declaration of London," which stated:

"Switzerland recognizes and proclaims the duties of solidarity which membership of the League of Nations imposes upon her, including herein the duty of cooperation in such economic and financial measures as may be demanded by the League of Nations against a Covenant-breaking State, and is prepared to make every sacrifice to defend her own territory under every circumstance, even during operations undertaken by the League of Nations, but will not be obliged to take part in any military action or to allow the passage of foreign troops or the preparation of military operations within her territory."

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